

Severity of Tetanus Not Enough To Cause People to Seek Shots

By ROY O. GILBERT, M.D.
County Health Officer

Between the years 1955 and 1959, some 187 cases of tetanus were reported in the State of California. Of this number, 89 or 47.6 per cent, died. Although the frightening severity of the disease hasn't changed in the more than 2000 years since it was first described, the majority of people in this country fail to obtain the medical protection that is now available against it.

Although tetanus is not a disorder of frequent occurrence, five cases have already been reported in Los Angeles County since the first of the year; one case was fatal, in another the course is as yet undetermined.

TETANUS is caused by the toxin produced by the tetanus bacilli which enter the body through a break in the skin. The wound need not be extensive. The disease has often resulted from such insignificant injuries as a cut, burn or scratch, or, more usually, from a puncture wound such as may be made by a nail, thorn or splinter, especially when contaminated with dirt. Every nonimmunized person is susceptible to the disease.

The incubation period of tetanus, which is the time that elapses between the actual infection and the first signs of illness, may vary from two days to several months but is usually from four days to three weeks. The shorter the incubation period, the less are the chances of recovery.

STIFFNESS AND aching of the muscles of the neck, jaw and face, and difficulty in opening the mouth and swallowing are among the first characteristic signs of the disorder. Spasms of the jaw muscles, causing them to close rigidly, has given the disease the common name of "lockjaw." Muscular contractions, and rigidity in some instances, may gradually involve the entire body. If treatment is successful, improvement is generally noted in the second week of illness but complete recovery may be a matter of some months.

Spores of the tetanus bacilli are found almost everywhere in the environment, and are generally present in the soil and in street and house dirt or dust. They have also been found on vegetables and on fruit that has been picked up from the ground. The organ-

isms are perfectly harmless if eaten however. It is only when they are sealed off from air, as in a wound, that they grow and produce the toxin that, is so injurious to man.

DOMESTIC farm animals, particularly horses and cows, are the principal reservoirs of the infection and this, to a large extent, accounts for the widespread distribution of the organisms in the soil. Therefore, many urban areas of Los Angeles County, which were formerly farms or pastures, present a greater hazard to the individual than do city areas that have long been industrialized and settled.

Immunization with tetanus toxoid affords active protection against the disease. After the initial two doses given a month apart and a reinforcing (booster) dose at the end of a year, immunity against the disease may be maintained with inoculations of the toxoid every four or five years and in the event of injury. Allergy to the toxoid is rare, and its administration carries little risk. Unfortunately, the protection it provides does not become effective for about 4 to 6 weeks after the first inoculation.

IN THOSE cases of emergency where previous tetanus protection has not been obtained or when the information cannot be elicited from the individual, tetanus antitoxin is given. The substance is prepared from horse serum and the protection it affords is swift, even though of short duration. In the opinion of medical authorities, its use is undesirable because of the frequency of serum reactions which are sometimes fatal.

When dealing with tetanus, an ounce of prevention is definitely worth a pound of cure. Every rancher, every laborer in industry, every mechanic, every gardener, every policeman, every fireman, every person who drives or rides in an automobile, indeed everyone should be immunized against tetanus.

A pamphlet on tetanus will be mailed to anyone who sends a card to the Division of Health Education, L.A. County Health Department, 241 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 12.

Rabbi Front, Choir on Radio Sunday

Rabbi Henri E. Front, spiritual leader of Temple Menorah, and the tempo choir will be presented over radio station KNX, Sunday at 8 a.m. on "The Church of the Air" program. Rabbi Front's sermon will be "Hope Springs Eternal." The music that will be featured has been arranged by Mrs. Harry Newman of Torrance, soprano soloist and voice teacher. Mrs. Newman is a graduate of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, and now associated with the music departments of Lavandale and Lennox High Schools. Harry Newman, Cantor, will also appear on the program.

The inspiration of music plays an important part in the service and is generally centered around the ancient biblical chant especially arranged for cantor and choir.

Choir members are Mesdames Morris Rothstein, Carl Pearlston, Torrance; Mae Ronne, Hermosa Beach; Myer Alpert, Palos Verdes Estates; Paul Turkheimer, Stella Benmayor, Grance Larsen, Mr. and Mrs. David Goldenberg of Redondo Beach.

Easter Bonnet

Her Easter bonnet this year is probably a turban, a sailor or a cloche style. These three hat looks promise to be the season's most important, with the turban appearing in strawcloths that look like knits or woven fabrics and in chiffon... the cloche featuring new depth, new brim movement.

Model Seder To Be Held Next Sunday

PTA Chairman Mrs. Eli Goldstone and co-chairman Mrs. Harvey Witnov of Southwest Temple Beth Torah, 14725 S. Gramercy Pl., Gardena, report that Sunday, March 26th the Religious School will take part in a Model Seder. Afaer special Passover services are conducted by Rabbi Henry E. Kraus, punch and macaroons will be served by the room mothers.

Also on Saturday, April 1, at 8 p.m. (second night of Passover) the Temple will hold a dessert Seder for both the parents and their children. For reservations call Religious Chairman Mrs. Lew Berkowitz, FA 1-0670.

Passover is the Jewish festival of freedom and commemorates the birth of a free nation. On the first two nights of Passover, the seder is celebrated in the Jewish home. Seder is the special order or program designated for these two nights. No other ceremony among Jews is celebrated with such pomp and gladness of heart as the seder. This interesting ceremony was originally designated to stimulate the interest of the Jewish child in the glorious past of his people, and to inspire him with hope for the future.

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